

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB.

ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER.

THE annual meeting and dinner were held on Saturday, November 24th, in the Imperial Hotel. At the meeting, where Dr. J. R. Levack, the president, was in the chair, the treasurer reported that he held a deposit receipt for £30 3s. 6d., being the amount of the club's capital account, one for £5 12s. 8d. being the Allt-na-Beinne bridge fund and one for £1 11s. 8d. being the Eidart bridge fund. The Lochnagar indicator fund amounted to £52 18s. 9d. Professor J. Norman Collie was re-elected Honorary President, Dr. Levack President, and Mr. J. A. Nicol, Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, and the following were elected members of Committee—Messrs. McCoss, J. Robb, A. M. M. Williamson, D. Levack, Conner, Drummond, Garden, Gauld and Hadden.

The dinner was attended by a company of some fifty people, including a number of ladies. Dr. Levack presided, and was accompanied by Principal Sir George Adam Smith and Professor Marnoch as guests. An exhibition of slides was a pleasant feature of the evening before the speaking began. The President showed views, chiefly of Lochnagar; Mr. William Garden, of Ross-shire and Sutherlandshire hills; and Mr. Parker of the Pyrenees, to which he paid his third visit in 1923.

Principal Sir George Adam Smith, giving the toast of "The Club" and speaking as an old mountaineer who had been a member of the Alpine Club since 1884, referred appreciatively to the lovely photographs which had been shown and to the activities of the Cairngorm Club. It had been part of the benefits which such clubs had bestowed upon the people, that they had proved by their excursions that there was just as good climbing material and mountain scenery in Scotland as there was in Switzerland or the Pyrenees, notwithstanding the greater altitude and the bigger figures by which those mountains imposed themselves upon distant peoples. He went on to refer to the great verse of the Psalmist "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my aid" and observed of mountains that they opened the mind, they stirred it to questioning, to prayer and to expectation, as no other natural phenomenon on the face of the earth did, and all of them who had the privilege of spending days among the hills, either in their own country or in other lands knew how they exalted the soul, cleaned the heart of all evil humours and brought them into

the temper and the attitude of worship from first to last while they were among them.

The President replied and observed that the club was flourishing, its membership was keeping up and was enthusiastic and the recruits that were coming in were young and vigorous and would keep the club in the same spirit. Mr. Walter A. Reid gave "Our Guests," to which Mr. C. W. Walker replied, and other toasts were "The President" given by Mr. William Garden, and "The Secretary" given by Mr. Parker. Mr. A. C. Simpson arranged a musical programme which was very much appreciated.

NEW YEAR MEET.

THE New Year Meet was held at the Invercauld Arms Hotel, Braemar, but the conditions, save on New Year's Day, which was a glorious winter day, were not favourable, wet and misty weather prevailing over the week-end. Those present were:—Dr. J. R. Levack (President), D. P. Levack, J. W. Levack, H. Butchart, G. Duncan, G. Geddes, G. Malcolm, W. A. Reid, C. Reid, M. Robb, and Dr. Tocher.

Morrone and Craig Choinnich provided "constitutionals" for the members who became tired of the comfortable hotel fire-side and on Monday, when the weather promised a little better, a party of three—Malcolm, Geddes and Robb—ascended Lochnagar by the Garrawalt Shiel. The going was heavy in the wet snow and took three hours up. There was no view.

Tuesday, New Year's Day, saw a complete change and the party of six—the three Levacks, W. A. Reid, and two non-members Miss E. S. Warren and Miss Ruth Warren—who went to Lochnagar, again by the Garrawalt Shiel, had a magnificent experience of winter climbing. As they started up through the Ballochbuie forest the sun was just tipping the tops of the higher hills on the north side of the Dee, and very soon the snow-filled corries of Beinn-a-Bhuird were lit up by the rays. They seemed to be flooded by a deep red glow, which quickly changed to pink, and later to a deep orange tint, toning into yellow, and finally into a brilliant white. The spectacle of this extraordinary colouring effect was one of the finest ever witnessed by any of the party. The way up lay over several intervening ridges towards the northern slope of Lochnagar. Later on the party suddenly came into the full blaze of the first sun of 1924, and they greeted it with a cheer. The last part of the climb was up over steep boulders, but very little snow remained, and there was no difficulty in reaching the main top in almost summer-like weather.

The sky was a cloudless deep blue, and the view, except for some perfectly white woolly-looking clouds to the west, was very extensive. All the familiar tops were recognised, and the Cairngorms were covered with a brilliant mantle of snow. It was so fine that half an hour was spent there, and then the party moved reluctantly westwards round the head of the cliffs past the Stuibuttress, and then down a long heather-covered slope into the glen, and so back to the Garrawalt Shiel.

On Wednesday the weather went bad again and all the party returned to Aberdeen.

EASTER MEET.

THE Easter Meet was held at Fortingall at the mouth of Glen Lyon. Owing to the rival attractions of the S.M.C. at Braemar the attendance was rather small, the following being present:—Dr. and Mrs. J. R. Levack, D. P. Levack, J. W. Levack, D. S. P. Douglas, and A. Marr (non-member).

On Saturday, April 19th, J. R. Levack and D. S. P. Douglas climbed Cairn Mairg (3419 ft.) a fine peak to the north west of Fortingall, under rather trying conditions with dense mist and sleet. Easter Sunday was a splendid day with brilliant sunshine and clear horizon, and Schiehallion (3547 ft.) was climbed by a party of five—J. R. Levack, D. P. Levack, J. W. Levack, D. S. P. Douglas and A. Marr. On Monday D. S. P. Douglas and A. Marr climbed Ben Lawers (3986 ft.) and had an even finer day than on the Sunday, the westerly wind having fallen considerably.

MAY HOLIDAY EXCURSION.

THE Club excursion on the May holiday, May 5th, was to Craiglich, and took the form of a walk along the semi-circle of hills which stretches from Lumphanan to Aboyne, and of which the summit named is the highest point. Twelve members had promised to come but only five turned up at the Joint Station:—Miss Henderson, H. Alexander, H. J. Drummond, McIntyre and Malcolm Smith. They were joined at Lumphanan station by the Secretary, who had spent the week-end crossing the Capel Month to Clova and returning by the Tolmount to Braemar. The small turn-out was explained, and perhaps excused, by the wretched day. Seldom have the vagaries of the weather been more strongly illustrated than at this May holiday. Friday and Saturday were drizzly and wet all day; on Sunday it suddenly cleared up and there was a

splendid day of sunshine, bright but cold: on Monday we were plunged back to rain and cloud, with snow on the hills, and then on Tuesday it cleared up again.

The tops of the hills on Monday were all in cloud and even such slopes as could be seen from Lumphanan under the 1,000 feet contour showed patches of fresh snow. It required some resolution to start up the Perkhill road upon what must be a most enjoyable eight miles round in fine weather but was, under these May holiday conditions, to be evidently a cold slog in sleet and mist. We followed the road, passing Macbeth's cairn in a field on the right—one of the member's historical allusions to the death-place of Macbeth being received with chilly interest—and reached the cross-roads at the summit, where we struck to the west up the ridge of Corse Hill. The wood shown here in the recent Ordnance Survey map has now been cut. Corse Hill, 1,383 feet, was our first top. A dip followed and then a stretch of level walking ending with a steepish but short rise to Craiglich, 1,563 feet, where there stands the round and somewhat shapeless cairn built in memory of the late Dr. Farquharson of Finzean and Migvie, whose lands ran to the top of Craiglich. We were glad to shelter behind the cairn from the driving sleet and wind from the east and eat a few sandwiches.

Compass directions were then taken for Leadlich, 1,278 feet, our third top which, when approached from Craiglich, proved to be hardly a separate top at all but merely a point where the ridge suddenly steepens and drops sharply down into the Howe of Cromar. Seen from below and from Tarland way Leadlich stands out well and it completely obscures Craiglich and its cairn. From Leadlich, being some 300 feet lower, we got a glimpse of green fields below but that was all, and, of course, we saw nothing of the glorious view which presents itself from this point on clear days of Mount Keen and Lochnagar. On the top of Craiglich the snow, if not dry, had at least been dryish, but at the lower levels which prevailed for the rest of our walk to Mortlich, the conditions were sopping because the snow was clinging like slush to the heather, and we were all soon wet to the knees except the one wise man who had brought puttees. From Leadlich a bend round the top of a little stream brought us to our fourth top, something over 1,250 feet, not named in the 1 inch map, and beyond that we came upon the Glen of the Peat Lochans, a name that had long interested me. It is scarcely a glen but rather a broad flat terrace on the ridge on which lie several little lochans or pools—they do not rise to the dignity of lochs—almost choked with sedge and grass and with a few gulls crying over them. No-

doubt they are nesting places for sea fowl like the lochs near Mulloch at Dinnet.

The going past the Peat Lochans was doubly wet and, after crossing a cart track leading over the ridge from Auchinhowe to Coull and getting a glimpse of the Loch of Auchlossan which has now recovered a big tract of ground at Dess, we entered on our last ascent up the ridge of Mortlich, pleasantly varied by a few rocky hummocks. The monument to the 10th Earl of Aboyne at the summit, 1,248 feet, which used to be such a landmark, is now lying a heap of broken masonry. Nothing was visible in any direction and we had to drop a hundred feet or so before Aboyne came into sight. The walk through the charming birch and pine wood past the loch and over the springy turf of the golf course was delightful after our long tramp in sleet and wet heather. Our times were Lumphanan, 11.15; Craiglich, 1; Mortlich, 2.45; Aboyne, 3.25. Had the day been fine, we would, of course, have lingered upon the ridge and taken another hour or more for the round. Even as it was, the excursion was a pleasant one, cold and all.

MOUNT BATTOCK IN MARCH.

THREE members of the Club—H. Alexander, David Levack, and J. L. McIntyre—climbed Mount Battock on a Saturday at the end of March. Our intention was to go by Glen Dye, up the Glen Road to Charr, and then by the shooting road to the bothy at the foot of Lochnawean Hill. From this point there seemed a comparatively easy ascent, over the shoulder of Lochnawean and then to the left, up to the cairn of Mount Battock. We left Aberdeen at 10 o'clock by car, taking the South Deeside Road to Bridge of Feuch, Strachan, and from there up the Dye Road to Glen Dye Lodge.

Here a hard fortune met us in the person of one in authority who informed us that the road from there onwards was too soft for a motor, which meant that we would have, (as we found afterwards), some nine miles additional walking, and that on a made road! This was not provided for in our plans, as we had ordered a meal at Whitestone for 4.30. However, we set out, finding the Glen Road rather uninteresting until we reached Charr. This is a curious, solitary group of houses at the junction where Glen Dye Road is met by a track leading over the hills from Fettercairn, (passing over Houndhillock and down the Water of Charr). No doubt it was once upon a time a great drove road from the Mearns to Deeside. We reached the bothy at the terminus of the shooting road at 1.15; this bothy lies practically on the 1,000 ft. level. After a halt for refreshments we left at 1.35, making, as we had been directed, for

another bothy that was visible, very soon, far up on the shoulder of the hill. This bothy lies about 1,800 ft. high, and from there to the top is some 760 ft. It appeared rather barn-like from a distance, rousing vague memories in one of us of some hospice in the Swiss Alps, but when we arrived it proved to be much more picturesque to a near-hand than to a distant view.

Our track lay up one of the two source-burns of the Dye, and gave us interesting little bits of snow work. The snow became more widespread as we ascended, but also the mist became deeper, so that soon after leaving the second bothy we had to take to the compasses and aneroid and trace our way by map, Levack leading. The happy result was, that we reached the top without any serious deviation at a few minutes after 3 o'clock.

The air had been desperately cold for the last hour; we had some very startling illusory effects from the mist. I have never found this so deceptive; again and again we saw what appeared to be a towering mass of rock, (possibly the cairn!) but it proved to be a small piece of rock, perhaps not more than a foot high, and quite close at hand. All of us had to make an effort to suppress this weakness. On the top we found a very interesting snow-effect. There is a high fence, the remains of a deer fence, every strand of which as far as we could see was draped in a snow curtain 8 or 9 ins. deep, caused, I suppose, by the gradual freezing of successive layers of sleet. It was exceedingly beautiful. Perhaps the most striking instance was a large coil of wire, in which every separate ring had a similar hem of sparkling white feathers attached to it. We came upon large numbers of white mountain hare, and other denizens of the hills. It was, however, so chillingly cold on the top that we only remained until 3.15; returning by the same road, we reached Glen Dye Lodge at 5.35. We did not arrive at Whitestone until nearly 6 o'clock, and as one of us had an engagement in town at 7, we had regretfully to be satisfied with a mere sniff of the savoury meal that was waiting for us, and to pass on in hunger to Aberdeen.

The climb from Glen Dye is very attractive, and should be exceptionally so in clear weather. When the road up the Glen is open to a car, it should be possible to get to the top and back to Aberdeen in a summer afternoon. Still more interesting would be the crossing from Glen Dye to Balloch an in the Forest of Birse. But the ways are long.

J. L. MCI.

BRAEMAR AT EASTER.

THE following Cairngorm Club members were at Braemar at Easter with the Scottish Mountaineering Club—William Garden, J. McCoss, J. A. Parker, and Gordon Wilson.

Friday 18th.—Garden and Wilson and members of the S.M.C. left Aberdeen with the morning train and drove up Glen Muich, traversing Lochnagar from Alltnaguibhsaich to Braemar. There was a very high wind and some mist on the summit, but the excursion was very much enjoyed, especially by one of the party who had not done the climb since 1908.

Saturday 19th.—McCoss, Parker, and Wilson in a party of six did Beinn a' Bhuird by Glen Slugan, the Sneck, Garbh Choire, north and south tops, and back by the Slugan. A great quantity of snow was encountered at the Slugan bothy, and at the Priest's Stone at the head of Glen Quoich. The descent of the north side of the Sneck was a little difficult owing to the icy condition of the rocks. The lower part finished in a long snow-slope, and a glissade brought the party into the corrie. The route taken from the corrie was up the snow close to the right side of the Mitre Ridge where a stretch of ice steps had to be cut. The ridge had a fine appearance and certainly did not look as if it could be climbed under the prevailing conditions, if at all. The snow-slope was continued to the top of the corrie, where mist prevailed, and the party was led to the north top in a very expert fashion by Parker. The footsteps of another party, who had come from the south top, were followed for the one and three-quarter miles to that point. Glissading was obtained in the Snowy Corrie, and there was a competition of speed on a run, the winner taking $9\frac{3}{4}$ seconds. Eagles seem to be getting more plentiful than they used to be, and three were seen in Glen Slugan.

Sunday 20th.—McCoss, Parker, and Wilson, in a party of five, did Cairntoul. The ascent was made by the knife-edge-ridge which proved interesting. On the summit the party was unable to walk owing to the wind, so crawling was resorted to as a means of locomotion. It was intended to glissade down the Saucer Corrie, but this was found impossible as one could not get over the edge for the wind. The Lochan-Uaine ridge was descended, and a long glissade brought the party into Glen Dee. The Dee was knee deep when crossed, but as the party re-crossed it was found to be deeper than was in keeping with comfort.

Monday 21st.—Parker, Wilson and a party did Ben Muich Dhui by Sron Riach and returned by Derry Cairngorm.

Club Saturday afternoon excursions were held, on June 21 to Ben Rinnes, and on July 5 to Carmaferg, the revival of the Strathspay railway excursion making the former outing possible.